

STATEMENT IN
SUPPORT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

IN RE: Manuel PEREZ-Ortiz

I, Special Agent Jose J. Gomez declare and state as follows:

On June 19, 2020, at approximately 1:40 p.m., Laredo Police Department (LPD) Officer Jaime E. Velasquez, operating LPD marked unit #1283, was traveling eastbound on the 3000 block of Saunders Street when officer Velasquez noticed a white in color Jeep Cherokee, displaying an obstructed temporary license plate (72495H3). The license plate was unsecured properly as it was flapping up and down with the wind. The temporary license plate was also secured with a license plate cover that obstructed the upper portion of the license plate. Officer Velasquez then noticed that the vehicle turned into the McCoy's parking lot located at 3809 Saunders Street. At that time, Officer Velasquez turned on his emergency lights and sirens indicating the vehicle to pull over to conduct a traffic violation stop. Officer Velasquez noticed that the passenger, Manuel Amador PEREZ-Ortiz, was moving around inside the vehicle making a lot of furtive movements as if he was trying to conceal something.

Officer Velasquez then asked both the driver and PEREZ-Ortiz to exit the vehicle. The driver gave Officer Velasquez consent to search the vehicle. Subsequently, a cardboard box was found on the rear passenger seat that contained a large amount of United States currency wrapped in multiple bundles. The amount of the currency totaled \$500,000.

After the currency was discovered, PEREZ-Ortiz stated that he had sold a ranch in Mexico and that he was looking to build a home in Laredo. In addition, PEREZ-Ortiz admitted that he had smuggled approximately \$500,000 U.S. currency from Mexico into the United States himself by illegally wading the Rio Grande River, thus bypassing the Port of Entry and the currency reporting requirement to U.S. Customs. PEREZ-Ortiz stated that he crossed the money into the United States the day prior to his arrest.

On said day, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Agents took possession of the currency pending forfeiture proceedings.

I declare (certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury that the forgoing is true and correct. Executed on the April 27, 2021.

/S/ Jose J. Gomez

Jose J. Gomez
Special Agent
Drug Enforcement Administration

Having reviewed the foregoing declaration, I find probable cause that the defendant(s) named above committed an offense against the laws of the United States and may therefore be further detained pending presentment before a judicial officer.

Executed on the 27th day of April, 2021.

P.C. found 4/27/21 at 5:10 pm.


UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE